

## The Urban League is Out of its Mind

Written by Raynard Jackson  
Thursday, 30 August 2012 10:08

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Has Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, lost his mind? He is one of the few media-appointed leaders of Black folk that I actually have some level of respect for. But his recent attack on Nike and basketball player LeBron James has greatly diminished my respect for him.

Last week, Morial issued a press release criticizing Nike and James for introducing their latest LeBron tennis shoe, LeBron X at a cost of \$ 315.

Please tell me this is just a joke. With all the problems facing the Black community, this is where Morial's attention is? Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, the National Urban League spearheads the efforts of its local affiliates through the development of programs, public policy research and advocacy. Supposedly, they are dedicated to economic empowerment.

I am very confused. They say they are dedicated to "economic empowerment," but yet they criticize a major corporation that has partnered with a Black who grew up in abject poverty. James is worth many millions of dollars and has utilized his marketability to enrich himself and Nike. James is the embodiment of what the NUL says it stands for – economic empowerment. Yet, Morial criticizes James for fulfilling what he NUL claims to stands for.

I thought this was what the civil rights movement was all about – to maximize opportunity without artificial barriers being placed in the way. In the 1960s, we were not allowed to participate in mainstream society. Now that we can, the very group that helped to make this happen is now telling us not to take advantage of the very opportunity they fought for us to

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have.

Morial's statement reads in part, "Today [I] asked Nike to abandon plans to release a \$315 basketball shoe, and implored parents not to spend scarce resources on an empty status symbol. To release such an outrageously overpriced product while the nation is struggling to overcome an unemployment crisis is insensitive at best...It represents twisted priorities and confused values..."

"Parents struggle to give their children every advantage, and while expensive shoes might draw admiration, achievement is the advantage that truly matters...Those dollars would better be spent on computers, books and school supplies...The economic crisis has escalated violence and crime in many urban communities," Morial said...Tragically, overpriced sneakers have become a false symbol of status, often sparking violence...I ask Nike – and the parents whose children are targeted in this misdirected campaign – to join us in our efforts to empower young people to value their own talents – athletic and otherwise – above material tokens and work together for broader access to the economic mainstream."

There are several troubling several things that are implicit in Morial's statement. These shoes are not targeted towards Blacks – Whites buy more of LeBron's shoes than Blacks. There is absolutely no causation between poverty and crime and I was surprised to see that the National Urban League, of all organizations making that argument. Second, why would Morial assume all or most Blacks can't afford to pay \$ 315 for a pair of shoes? Last time I saw Marc, I didn't sport him wearing a low priced suit from KMART. Who is he to tell a parent that they "represent twisted priorities and confused values?"

Yet, Morial and his organization expend tremendous energy pushing a homosexual rights agenda while Black-on-Black crime goes through the roof and as Black unemployment continues to rise. Tell me who "represents twisted priorities and confused values?"

How many jobs has pushing the homosexual agenda created for Blacks? How has pushing the homosexual agenda prevented one Black kid from being killed in Chicago?

Marc, how you ever thought about the number of Blacks that work for Nike across the country and how many jobs have been created by virtue of the popularity of LeBron's shoes?

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Liberals like Morial, don't believe a Black parent has the capacity to do what's in the best interest of their own family, therefore some third party (Morial, the government, etc.) must force a parent to do what they think should be done. They don't trust the parent.

Morial and liberals like him must make up their mind. Either Blacks are smart enough to do right by their kids or they need "massa" to raise their kids for them. This is another example of the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Though I may disagree with a parent spending that type of money on a pair of shoes, it's their right. Weak people take strong positions on weak issues. Morial is truly out of his league.

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